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## She Didn't Swear By the Lord Harry

JULIA TAKES HER CHANCE. By Concordia Merrel. Thomas Seltzer.

YOU will just have to bear with us, for we are determined to praise this book from the beginning to the end of this review, and our thoughts, aside from those expressed here, are just as favorable to author and book.

We were told to take "Julia" home and read it at once. We never think



Concordia Merrel.

of disobeying solemn instructions like that, but if the words had been added, "and close shop by midnight," we surely should have thrown all caution to the winds and done just what we did do—read until 'o'clock and then sit down and scrawl our delight before sleep overtook us.

"Julia Takes Her Chance" is a book you will read because Julia makes you. We have had almost enough English settings lately, but this story, though it is in and around London, is so full of living people and their joys and sorrows, successes and failures, that we were swallowed up in the sense of humanity and cared little where the people happened to live—Julia, Lord Henry Penryth, Julia's chum Norah Malone, Nicholas Penryth, the twins Madeline and Clairette Longman, known as "Bun" and "Butter" individually and as "Buttered Buns" collectively, Pelman Barclay and, lastly, Jane Graham.

You see, Julia wants to be an actress, and she has it in her, otherwise Pelman Barclay, when he saw her at the performance of the Little Uppington Amateur Dramatic Society, would not have chosen her for a clever little part in his new play, then rehearsing—all because she cried with her throat and chin and eyes, whereas most girls just wrinkle up their foreheads.

And Julia, much surprised and frankly admitting her timidity, "takes her chance."

But there are other chances in the book—the "chance" to be Lady Henry Penryth—the "chance" to be Jane Graham—the "chance" to be back with Pelman Barclay and—yes, there's another "chance," but you are going to read the book and enjoy it just as much as we did—and even more, because you see, your job isn't reading books.

The tale is not an attempt at mystery. It is outspoken. Though it keeps some of its characters in suspense it doesn't try to fool the reader, but lets him in on all the funny little incidents and all the mysterious little happenings. It is one of the most modest stories written in the first person that we have ever read. We feel that there is more than just I—Julia—I. We become as intimate with Julia's friends as she is and there is a great deal of satisfaction in that.

In Lord Harry and Nicholas we have two real men with a very human mixture of faults and good traits.

In Julia we have a girl who tries to be fair to herself and every one else—who isn't afraid of work, and who isn't afraid to take "her chance."

And the artistic "Buttered Buns"—you will have many a laugh over them. No; they aren't infants, but grown young women "all dressed up in beads and embroidery scarfs and short hair and long necks, and thick stockings and sandals."

Get the book to-morrow and in the evening settle down after dinner—early, because you will want to finish before you wind the clock and set the alarm and crawl into bed—and spend a happy evening with Julia. Then turn out the light and read Julia all over again in your dreams.

## Took the Curse Off

THE AVENGER. By Samuel Gordon. The Macaulay Company.

WE want to compliment Mr. Gordon on choosing Africa instead of India as the setting in which Derek Skene gives the angry blow which puts the curse of Cain in his heart and brings about the whole story. It seems that every book we have read—almost every one, to be a little more accurate—has in it something of the mysticism of India or the hatred of an Indian.

Of course in a book that always gives a fellow a chance to work out his salvation, and so Derek gets his. As Sir Clement, Derek throws his energies into his redemption. He surely goes through enough to redeem any man's soul.

Love comes to him early in the book, but he can only look upon it as the avenger of his hidden sin, and so he puts poor, dear little Hazel to many an unhappy hour.

## NEW FICTION

### The Moon-Calf Tries Marriage

BRIARY BUSH. By Floyd Dell. Alfred A. Knopf.

YEARS have not done their full duty by Felix Fay, Floyd Dell's wistful hero, who comes to manhood and matrimony in Mr. Dell's new book. Not the acquisition of a wife, nor the horrors of house hunting can mature Felix; he continues, hopelessly and inevitably, a moon-calf. True, he is older and wiser; his sensibilities have been dulled sufficiently to enable him to ask the managing editor or a raise; he is not above trying to write a play "for the popular taste." But age and wisdom avail him little in coping with the problems of a temperamental wife; his troubles in this regard are legion—nor does he help matters any by seeking surcease of sorrow with other ladies. And the reader is conscious of genuine relief when a reunion, which appears to be permanent, is contrived as the book's conclusion.

Measured against "Moon-Calf," of which it is the sequel, "The Briary Bush" fails to satisfy. Beauty is in it, of course, and intensity, and whimsicality, but none of these in such quantity and so restrained as delighted us in its predecessor. Fay's Chicago encounters are, for the most part, only mildly interesting; easily the best of them is Mr. Dell's description of the hero's misery at a famous poet's afternoon tea. And most satisfactory of all is the story of the hero's love tangles. Rose Ann, who for some inexplicable reason marries him, is authentically pictured; there is understanding, whimsy and tenderness in this portrait.

Tenderness, indeed, is at once Mr. Dell's stronghold and his pitfall. Why are his people so ingratiating toward one another? The reader, after several chapters of their polite repartee, has the sensation of being at a tea party of bobbing manikins. They touch hands, they smile, they kiss—but nobody says "I love you" in a tone of conviction. The amours are Victorian, as are the dialogues, and—for the most part—the discussions.

Mr. Dell is an old school novelist, among the very first in the country. Through his work runs a rarely delicate threat of witchery, soft, rose-colored, gentle. It is this that puts out the twentieth century mind; he gives one too much gold leaf and too little iron. He is a gold spectacled gentleman who sees the world as a lovely play place; there is no brutality in his world, nor bitterness, nor re-creation. The souls that Mr. Dell analyzes so competently and with such true insight are comfortable souls. They are kindly, calm, refined souls. Were he less of an artist they would be complacent.

Extracting dialogue is not perhaps the fairest way in the world to prove the case. None other avails, however, so we lift the following from page 376, the occasion being a dinner party of two, Felix and a flame:

"I renounce you utterly," he said. "You are a base pretender. Besides, you are too young to have thought of such things. I believe you said you were 25."

"I lied, to impress you. I am 24. How old are you?"

"I am 24. How old are you?"

"Not at all. I am really 27."

"Devil! How old are you?"

"Older than you, anyway."

"I don't believe you."

"I am an awful liar," she said, with an air of telling him a secret. "I shall distrust every word you say henceforth."

"Good—then I shall always tell the truth, and you'll be no wiser. You can't hold me."

"Who wants to hold you? Not I!" he said.

"Oh, don't you?"

"What would I do with you? What are you good for? No, I don't want you. Go home," he told her.

"Now I shan't."

"All right, stay then."

Mr. Dell is happiest in his narrative, and in the reasoning process through which he puts his characters. Their mental analyses are clear; and some of the passages of introspection—noticeably Rose Ann's interview with her mirror—and her discussion of the nuptial bed with the housekeeper—are quick with power and beauty. The book is important and compelling, alike for its excellent diction, its keen analysis and its vivid report of the midwestern mind. It may not be dismissed.

JOHN BLACK.

### The Author Dreamed His Plot

ANDIVUS HEDULLO. By Edward Lucas White. E. P. Dutton & Co.

A MORE amazing thing than the story itself, although the author considers that very amazing, are the afterwords which he puts in the book when he has already written "finis." These explanations are supposed to retrace all the steps and account for all the motives used in this tale of Rome in the reign of Commodus. They explain the book about as well as Edgar Poe's analysis of the workmanship of a poem did "The Raven."

It would not do to intimate that Edward Lucas White was not sincere in the explanation he so unnecessarily makes about how he came to write the book and from how many and what different sources he drew his incidents. But while it may be safe to say the author does protest too much and confess too freely, it is safer to find in his very explanation contrary things that vitiate his statement, however honestly in intention he made it. Thus he states positively that he went through all the adventures recounted in this 700 page novel in a dream and as it were, he was in sleep Andivus Hedullo and in order to make a book he had only to take up a pen and write down his dream.

So far so good. But he then admits that only certain passages of his hero's life remained clear and distinct so that he was enabled to write them down as it were automatically. And when the dream blurred then the author had to "create" the lost sections.

This, too, is not all for Mr. White explains fully the sources of his plot and says they all came from his readings of other authors. He drew at will—this is a paraphrase of his own statement—on Victor Hugo, Mary Wilkins, Robert Louis Stevenson and a dozen more authors who would feel amazed to be classed together even in this indirect way. If none of the incidents in the reminiscences (?) of Andivus were original, if in his waking times Mr. White could trace each of them to its creator, how could he feel that in his subconscious mind he was Andivus passing through these

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## For the Woman Automobilist

MANSLAUGHTER. By Alice Duer Miller. Dodd, Mead & Co.

WHEN men set out to win a woman's love the vast majority buy flowers, books, movie tickets, dinners, yachts and ice cream sodas.

There is, however, a small but rather select school of male wooers who say that the way to capture the adoration of a woman is to hit 'er a clip on the chin. Not too hard a clip, un'erstan'—just a tap: not so aw th lay 'er out



Alice Duer Miller.

but wit' enough on it to let 'er know who's boss. See?

In "Manslaughter" Alice Duer Miller teaches to subscribe to the chin clipping tenet.

Of course the district attorney, young and ambitious, didn't actually wallop the heroine on the point of the jaw, technically, we believe, termed "the button." No, all he did to the beautiful, rich, spoiled Lydia Thorne was to send her to prison for three years for killing a traffic policeman with her automobile.

Everybody who reads the newspapers will at once recognize how unconventional the district attorney was. In these shimmering days the forces of law and order don't send beautiful and rich and spoiled ladies to jail for things like that. Instead they call out the police glue club to sing "Lead, Kindly Light" and then advise the new traffic policeman to watch out for the cars.

There is a great deal to recommend about this book. As a piece of light fiction it's immense. But more than that, the gentlemen who dispense driving licenses to women should insist that each applicant read "Manslaughter."

CHARLES G. NORRIS has written a "big book" in

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ARTHUR T. VANCE, editor of The Pictorial Review, writes: "I sat up until after one o'clock last night to finish 'Brass.' Man, do you know you have written a great big book. I am proud of you! It is fine work!"

FANNIE HURST writes: "I think it rides Norris into the rank of foremost American novelists, not on any of the artificially stimulated ripples created by art-for-God-sakes rocking the boat, but on the booming wave of truth."

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